

REMARKS

Claims 2, 4, 9-12 and 14-22 are pending in this application after entry of the amendments above. Since rewriting the claims with the misaligned formulas would be extremely confusing, applicants have rewritten all of the claims with misaligned formulas as new claims and amended the dependencies of the remaining claims as required in light of the new claim numbering. Applicants have also reformatted the claims slightly in non-substantive ways. As such, these amendments do not raise new issues and should be entered notwithstanding the finality of the pending Action. Entry of these amendments and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, are respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for withdrawing the double patenting rejection and the rejection on Tomikawa.

Claims 1-12 and 16 stand rejected as anticipated by or, in the alternative, as obvious over, Oba U.S. Patent No. 5,518,864. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

With the correction of the indefiniteness problems rightly noted by the Examiner, the basis for rejection on Oba evaporates. Although applicants had explained to the Examiner in their prior response that Oba does not expressly or inherently disclose the requirements of claim 1 that some of the carboxyl groups of the polymer represented by general formula (1) are imidized by reaction with an adjacent amide group, and the percentage such imidization is from 1% to 50% of those carboxyl groups, the Action does not recognize or address this failing of Oba. As applicants explained previously, Oba does not disclose imidization at all in its extensive disclosure and instead uses condensation with a diamine to produce its compounds at low temperatures. As a result, Oba's compounds do not contain imide rings and cannot exhibit imidization even as high as the 1% lower limit claimed. Oba does not expressly disclose applicants' invention, nor does it inherently disclose the invention because it is not the necessary and inevitable result of following Oba's disclosure to arrive at the degree of imidization claimed. The Examiner has failed to provide any reasoned basis for an inherency rejection and has

likewise made none of the findings necessary to support an obviousness rejection based on Oba,. Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner cannot provide such findings because Oba is devoid of any appreciation or disclosure of the claimed imidization.

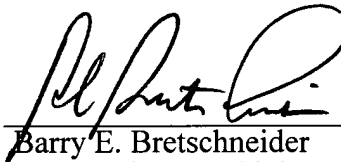
Accordingly, a notice of allowance is solicited.

In the event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorize the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952**, referencing docket number 360842006010.

Respectfully submitted,

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